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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Life in America One Hundred Years Ago. By Gaillard Hunt, Litt. D., LL.D. (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1914. 298 p. \$1.50 net)

Mr. Hunt states in the preface that "this book was written at the request of the Committee of One Hundred to celebrate one hundred years of peace between Great Britain and the United States at the city of Washington, and is a contribution to that celebration. It is a sketch, drawn in outline, of life and manners in the United States in the year when peace was made with Great Britain." The book does not purport to be a continuous narrative, nor even a complete description of American society of a century ago. Rather it attempts to give glimpses of the most important phases of the life of that time, and in this effort succeeds very well. As the biographer of Madison and Calhoun, the editor of Madison's *Writings*, *The First Forty Years of Washington Society*, etc., Mr. Hunt is well qualified for the task which he has discharged so satisfactorily.

The first chapters reveal the conditions existing when the treaty of Ghent was received in Washington. The period is portrayed as a transition from the Revolutionary epoch, dominated by such figures as Washington, Franklin, and Jefferson, to the national period, wherein Clay, Webster, Calhoun, and Jackson were to assume the lead. The area and population are shown, with well-selected statistics, which help us to understand the opinion Americans had of themselves, which is contrasted with the manner in which they were regarded by Europeans. The institution of slavery as it was, and as it appeared to the people of 1815, its sectionalizing effects, and other potentialities are treated briefly, clearly, and judiciously.

Very interesting are the chapters on modes of travel, costume, and women. The reading of the women of the day, we are told, included such poetry as Thomson's *Seasons* and Young's *Night Thoughts*; such essays as the *Rambler* and the *Spectator*. Ramsay's *History of the Revolution*, Mrs. Chapone's letters on government, and similar heavy doses might be diluted with Hannah More, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, etc., but as an antidote to such frivolous books, works like Dodd's *Reflections on Death* and Littleton's *Dialogues of the Dead* were prescribed. The author affirms that women "accepted these books submissively," and

even read some of Swift's insults to their sex. That music and the drama were by no means non-existent is clearly shown. Next the author discusses the rural mass of the population, the lower classes, their pursuits, characteristic humor, and religion.

One of the most charming and valuable portions of the book is devoted to education and literature. Several chapters are given to what our sociological brethren denominate "social pathology," but there is nothing pathological about the chapters themselves. The evils of the time are stated frankly, but the efforts at reform and improvement are also indicated, and it is made evident that the period in which the seeds of today were germinating was not degenerate. Its faults were mainly those of youth.

Readers of the chapter on "doctors" will heave a sigh of thankfulness that we are not subject to such ministrations today, and the following chapter on "cooks" explains partly why so many needed the doctor. Mr. Hunt shows that there was little discontent due to social or economic inequality; the slaves were generally satisfied or apathetic, while the colonization society was endeavoring to handle the problem of the freedmen. Such communistic experiments as the Shakers and Harmonists were so uncharacteristic as to be called rightly "excrescences."

The volume closes with an account of the government, a sketch of the president, and a brief chapter on the patriotism back of both. It is to be regretted that the plan of the book did not include chapters on "suffrage and election" and "industries," which the author could have treated so entertainingly. These would have made the work still more valuable, both to the general reader and the specialist.

Altogether, the book is a very interesting, instructive, and timely presentation of the salient facts of the period when the young nation was just becoming conscious of itself. The style of the book is light, clear, and attractive, with a delicate vein of humor running through it, revealing the author's insight into the life of the time. So well done is it that it seems carping at trifles to say that the reference (p. 43) to John Gaillard, president *pro tempore* of the senate as vice president is misleading. So few persons recall who was vice president even a decade ago that the title vice president should have been omitted. The sentence (p. 48), "One example of the feeling which, while it was diminishing and was not universal, was present will suffice," is inexcusable in an author of Mr. Hunt's training and experience. This is likewise true of a similar sentence on page 224.

The statement (p. 128) that "naturally, the last sect to make an effort in the direction of higher education was the most popular with the com-

mon people, and it was not until 1829 that the Methodist Church founded Randolph-Macon College at Ashland in Virginia" is misleading in several ways. The catalog of Randolph-Macon claims 1830 as the date of foundation, and it is neither the earliest nor the oldest Methodist college. Cokesbury College, near Baltimore, was the earliest, but like Asbury, founded in 1816, it was short-lived. McKendree College was established by the Methodists in 1827 and was opened in 1828.

The binding of the book is neat, the paper and type clear, the proof-reading well done. Only two lapses caught the present reviewer's eye, viz., "Rousseau's Emilie" for Emile (p. 77), and "Barrataria" for Barataria, on page 163 and following. Sixteen full-page illustrations enhance the attractiveness of the volume. These include portraits of the notables, costumes, prominent buildings, playbills, contemporary views of Charleston, New York, and other cities. An extensive, systematic, and well-selected bibliography shows that Dr. Hunt has utilized the valuable manuscript sources under his charge — newspapers, periodicals, travels, biography, history and fiction. About the only serious omission seems to be Longstreet's *Georgia Scenes*. The book has a fair index.

MILLEGE L. BONHAM, JR.

Abraham Lincoln. By Rose Strunsky. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914. 331 p. \$2.25 net)

At the outset the author frankly states, that she has "not tried to find an unopened letter or an unpublished anecdote" of Mr. Lincoln, and that she bases whatever claim for recognition the book may possess on "the new historical perspective which it throws on the man and his times." Whether or not she has accomplished the ambitious task of presenting a "new historical perspective" must depend on the perspective held by each individual reader before he has examined the book, for about no other subject in American history are so many widely different perspectives held. At any rate the writer has emphasized certain phases of Mr. Lincoln's life hitherto very much neglected.

The work is well balanced, well written, and eminently fair in its treatment of disputed questions. It is in fact superior to much of the recent Lincolniana of a similar nature. Particularly worth while are the last few chapters in which Mr. Lincoln's relations to the Negro, to the Union, and to present-day politics are discussed.

The book curiously combines with these good qualities defects too serious to be overlooked. In studiously avoiding any attempt to "find an unopened letter or an unpublished anecdote" the writer has evidently failed even to become familiar with several of the already-known facts on her subject. It appears strange that she should state or imply that